

American Canoe Association || American Rivers || Carpenter Nature Center
The Conservation Alliance || Crow River Trail Guards || Earthjustice || ElyMN.us
Environmental Law & Policy Center || Environment America
Environmental Protection Information Center
Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness || Great Old Broads for Wilderness
John Huston Polar Explorer || Klamath Forest Alliance || Kootenai Environmental Alliance
League of Conservation Voters || Lutfisk Technologies, Inc. || League of Conservation Voters
Milwaukee Riverkeeper || Minnesota Izaak Walton League
National Parks Conservation Association || National Wildlife Federation
Natural Resources Defense Council
Northeastern Minnesotans for Wilderness and the Campaign to Save the Boundary Waters
Rams for the Boundary Waters and Wilderness Advocacy, A Colorado State University
Registered Student Organization
Sierra Club || Sierra Club North Star Chapter || Voyageurs National Park Association
Voyageur Outward Bound School
Waterkeeper Alliance || The Wilderness Society || Wilderness Watch || Winter Wildlands Alliance
W. J. McCabe Chapter, Izaak Walton League of America

Dear Representative,

On behalf of our millions of members and supporters across the country, we, the undersigned organizations, urge you to cosponsor H.R. 5598 Boundary Waters Wilderness Protection and Pollution Prevention Act, introduced by Representative Betty McCollum (D-MN), Representative Francis Rooney (R-FL), Representative Dean Phillips (D-MN), Representative Fred Upton (R-MI), Representative Grijalva (D-AZ) and Representative Lowenthal (D-CA). This important bi-partisan legislation would permanently protect the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, Voyageurs National Park, and their headwaters in the Superior National Forest from harmful and toxic mineral extraction that would irreparably pollute this pristine watershed for future generations.

Located in Northeastern Minnesota, the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness is a national treasure of 1.1 million acres of pristine interconnected lakes and rivers in the Superior National Forest. The Boundary Waters is contiguous with Ontario's Quetico Provincial Park and upstream of Minnesota's Voyageurs National Park. Enjoyed as the most visited Wilderness in the country, generations of Americans have developed a lifelong love of nature through superb camping, fishing, canoeing, and hiking experiences. The love for the Boundary Waters also powers a strong and enduring outdoor recreation economy in Northeastern Minnesota responsible for 17,000 jobs and \$913 million in sales annually. The Boundary Waters' tranquil lakes, forests, trails and more than 1,200 miles of canoe routes offer unparalleled recreation, but also provide critical habitat for fish and wildlife such as lake trout, moose and the federally-listed Canada lynx.

This incredible region is now threatened by renewed pressure from a foreign mining company. Antofagasta's Twin Metals proposes to develop a sulfide-ore copper mine in the watershed upstream of the Boundary Waters, Quetico Park, and Voyageurs National Park. The current administration has shown an irrational drive to allow this project to move forward. In September 2018, the U.S. Department of Agriculture cancelled a two year moratorium on mining activity and an accompanying environmental review of the impact of sulfide-ore copper mining in the watershed; the proposal under study was a 20-year mining ban. The administration has subsequently refused to provide the draft reports, likely because the science from the review would show the ban was appropriate. Then this past spring, the U.S.

Department of Interior renewed previously cancelled mineral leases to pave the way for Twin Metals to develop its mine. Late last month, Twin Metals submitted a mine plan, a pivotal step in driving forward a mine that would pollute the Boundary Waters, Quetico Park, and Voyageurs National Park with toxic chemicals and pollutants. Empty promises of environmentally-friendly and modern mining techniques hide the dirty truth about the proposed mine: if this mine is built, there will be no way to avoid irreversible damage to these protected national treasures. This was exactly the finding by the Forest Service when it applied for a 20-year mineral withdrawal in 2016.

Today, our country has the opportunity to permanently protect one of the most pristine ecosystems and the cleanest water in the nation. The Boundary Waters, Quetico Park, and Voyageurs National Park ecosystem are not just places, they are a way of life for scores of thousands of Minnesotans, Americans, Canadians, and visitors from across the globe who come to experience the beautiful lakes and unspoiled rivers. This is why permanent protection has the support of a wide coalition of organizations, individuals, businesses, and elected officials across the political spectrum representing, outdoor recreationists, conservationists, sportsmen and women, businesses, and many others.

According to a 2018 poll conducted by the pollster Fabrizio Ward, 70% of registered voters in Minnesota oppose sulfide-ore copper mining near the Boundary Waters. This wild and special place deserves permanent protection from short term extractive interests that will ravage the land and pollute the water for the profit of a few, at the environmental, public health and economic cost of many. We implore you to cosponsor H.R. 5598 to ensure this incredible region gets the permanent protection it deserves.

Sincerely the undersigned organizations,

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